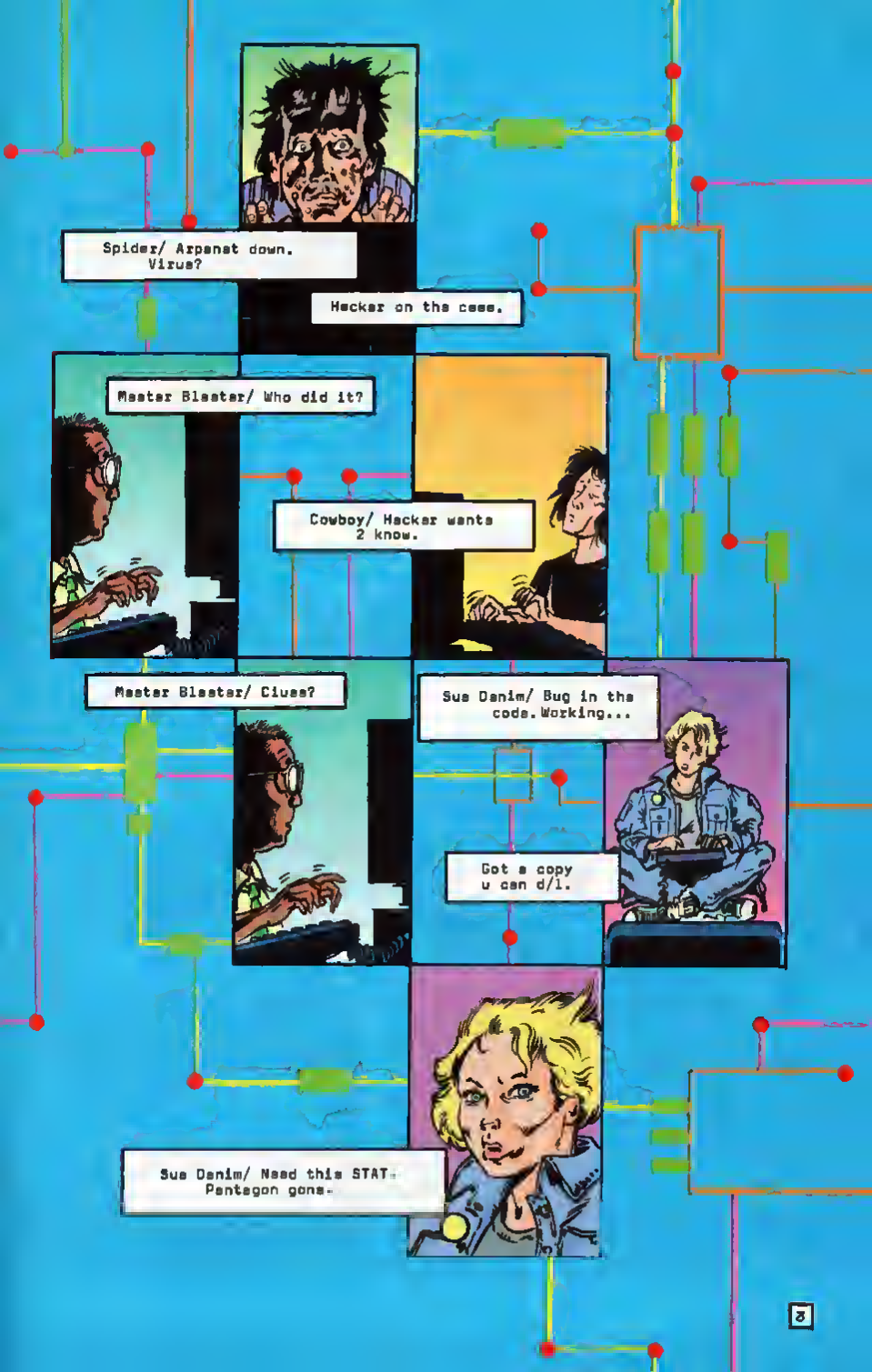
The Hacker Files
NO 2 SEP 92
1ST CAN 2ED
SoftWar(2.0)
By Lewis Shiner,
Tom Sutton &
Mark Buckingham

BRONX
SCHOOL
SCIENCE
HEY!
CHECK IT OUT!
YO! RIP IT, HENRY!
GRRRRIND
POW
WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING, DWEEB.
HA! DWEEB INDEED
WHAT A DORK!
LITTLE DOES HE REALIZE...
HE'S DEALING WITH... MASTER BLASTER!
HA HA HA HA

Mother,
I'll be home
late. Make
something for
dinner.
Love,
Mom
CLICK
ALERT
I'M THE CULT of PERSONALITY
WHOA.
INTENSE.
Master Blaster/ What's the story?


Spider/ Arpanet down. Virus?
Hacker on the case.
Master Blaster/ Who did it?
Cowboy/ Hacker wants 2 know.
Master Blaster/ Clues?
Sue Denim/ Bug in the code. Working...
Got a copy u can d/l.
Sue Denim/ Need this STAT. Pentagon gone.

SOFT WAR
CHAPTER 2
I got into town around MIDNIGHT The Pentagon computers were completely THRASHED and Sarge STEEL was expecting thermonuclear war any minute
Things went DOWNHILL from there
LEWIS SHINER • WRITER/CREATOR
TOM SUTTON • PENCILS
MARK BUCKINGHAM • INKS
DIGITAL CHAMELEON • COLORS
ROBERT GREENBERGER • EDITOR

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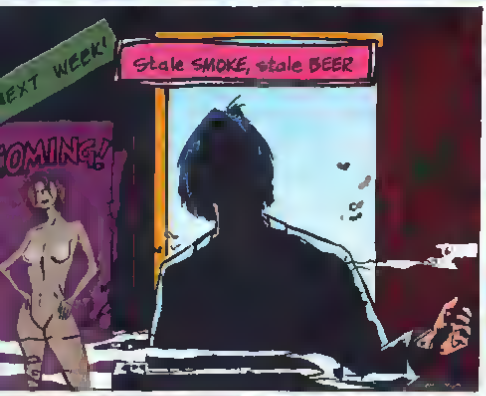
I took a stab at an ANTIVIRUS but I didn't get to test it
PARK
I was waiting for it to compile when I saw something I wasn't SUPPOSED to. Then some goon in a uniform CLOBBERED me
Next thing I know I'm in some MOTEL room with a senior VP from DIGITRONIX
He's the guy makes the COMPUTERS that have gone HAYWIRE
He's also the guy that FIRED me, two years ago
MARSHALL, YOU'RE A BAD PENNY I CAN'T SEEM TO GET RID OF YOU
YOUR BOYS CAN'T FIX THIS ONE, SUTCLIFFE. CAN?
GET HIM OUT OF HERE.
5

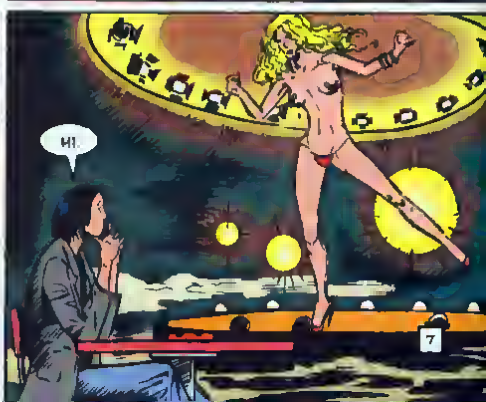
NOW WAIT A MINUTE...
IF HE GETS HURT, TELL THE COPS HE ATTACKED YOU
YOU WANT TO WATCH THAT FIRST STEP
They could have at least let me SLEEP another hour or two

I caught a CAB outside the hotel
The driver knew JUST what I wanted
Morning is not the best time for this part of town
MUSIC BOX
SEX SHOW
CABARET
WURTH
ITALO
EMP
NUDE DANCERS
TOPLESS 24 HOURS
THE ORGY GALS AND SLUT JUGGS
CAPITAL
LEATHER GIRLS
NIKI PUSS
ADULT MOVIES
ADULT BOOKS
TAXI
GINA

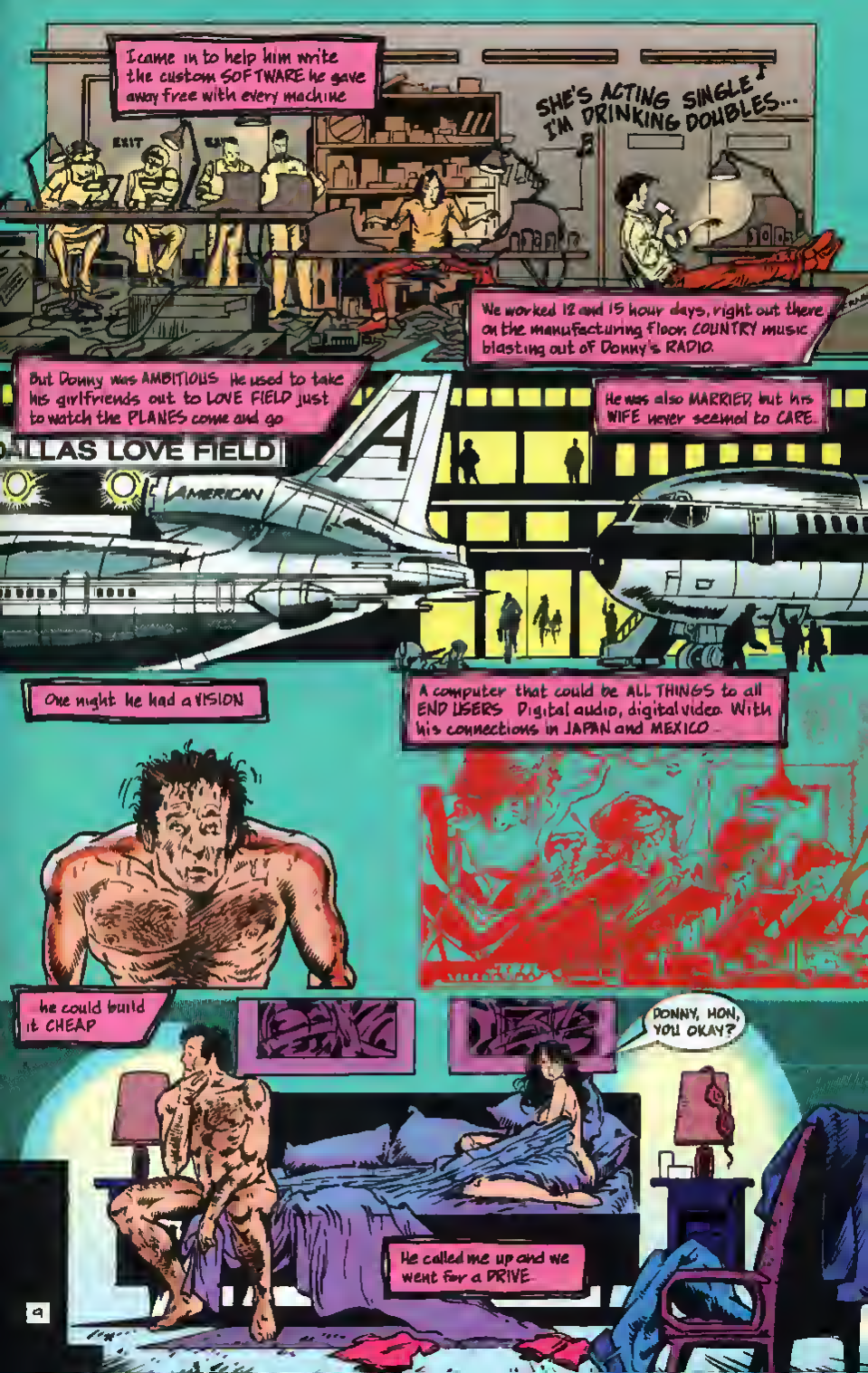

NEXT WEEK!
COMING!
Stale SMOKE, stale BEER

Nobody really has their HEART in it But that's okay.
SCHZZZ

I'm not here for SINCERITY


HI.

Can't keep my mind on what's in FRONT of me
Goddamn SUTCLIFFE
PREFERRED STOCK
Digitronix World Industries
I was at Digitronix three YEARS before Donny Travis hired him
DOS
DIGITRONIX RESIDENT OPERATING SYSTEM
DIGITRONIX SALES FIGURES
Current
Sutcliffe was one of FIVE middle managers he brought in from Compu-Tech CompuTech went UNDER due to incompetent middle management
I never did UNDERSTAND that
digitronix
Digitronix started out as a one-man company on the north side of Dallas That man was DONNY TRAVIS.
Donny was a SALESMAN He'd hop in his CORVETTE with a bottle or two of JACK BLACK and drive out to some client's operation in EAST HELL
LET'S WRITE SOME CODE.
He'd keep that client up all NIGHT, until he had a SIGNATURE on an ORDER Then he'd drive HOME
LOOKS LIKE WE GOT US A DEAL.
8


I came in to help him write the custom SOFTWARE he gave away free with every machine
SHE'S ACTING SINGLE I'M DRINKING DOUBLES...
We worked 12 and 15 hour days, right out there on the manufacturing floor. COUNTRY music blasting out of Donny's RADIO.
But Donny was AMBITIOUS He used to take his girlfriends out to LOVE FIELD just to watch the PLANES come and go
He was also MARRIED, but his WIFE never seemed to CARE.
LLAS LOVE FIELD
AMERICAN
One night he had a VISION
A computer that could be ALL THINGS to all END USERS Digital audio, digital video. With his connections in JAPAN and MEXICO
he could build it CHEAP
DONNY, HON, YOU OKAY?
He called me up and we went for a DRIVE

I'd been DYING to do my own OPSYS I had a lot of IDEAS

I don't know WHERE he got the money But inside a month Digitronix had DOUBLED in size and doubled AGAIN the next month

That was when SUTCLIFFE came on board Very DOWN HOME, very much one of the BOYS

HA HA HA

HA HA HA

SO THEN THE GUY SAYS, "BOSS, WHAT WE'VE GOT HERE IS AN *INSURMOUNTABLE OPPORTUNITY*."

I didn't pay much attention to the SUITS Me and YOSHIO and FRODO were getting the new BOX out the door

YES!

FRODO was the smartest programmer I'd ever met Also a hell of a nice guy, for a CHRISTIAN

digitron

HI THERE!

We killed them at the TRADE SHOWS Suddenly Digitronix was everywhere So I asked about the ROYALTIES Donny had promised me

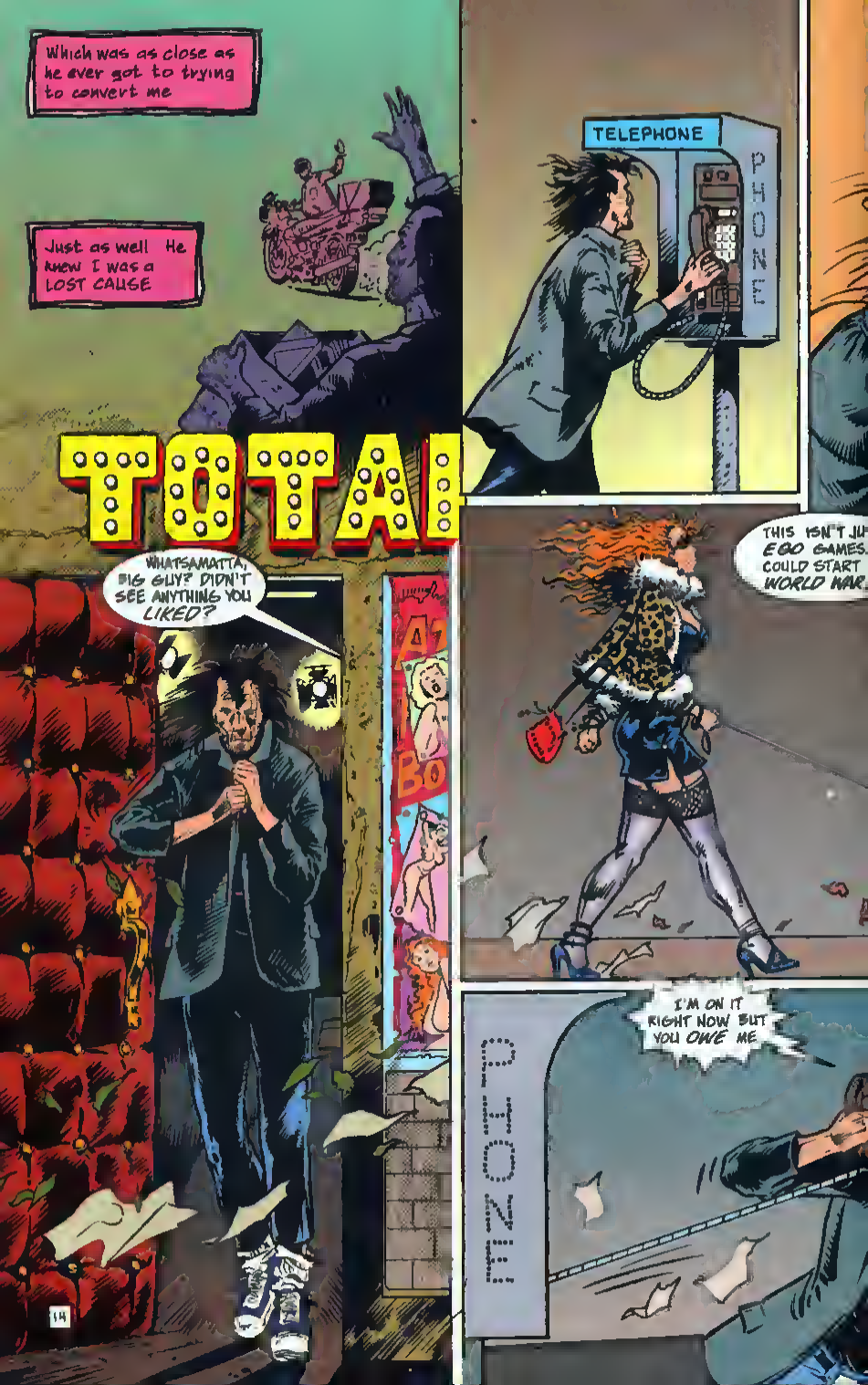
YOU HAVE ANYTHING IN *WRITING*? BECAUSE HE WAS *NOT* AUTHORIZED

SORRY.

They'd taken away our building KEYS
One of Sutcliffe's SECURITY enhancements
I really missed those all-night WORK sessions
Fortunately I still had my LOCKSMITH skills
I copied off all the work that was MINE
It took four BOXES of DISKETTES
Then I WIPED every other copy I could FIND
And headed for HOME
ON
OFF
It was the silent ALARM that got me
Even then I might have been OKAY
But I freaked and tried to RUN
POLICE
POLICE
That was my FIRST night in JAIL

The next morning Sutcliffe offered me a DEAL
WE DROP ALL CHARGES--
WHAT CHARGES?
BREAKING AND ENTERING, THEFT OF PROPRIETARY INFORMATION, SABOTAGE--
THAT WAS MY STUFF. IF YOU GO TO COURT YOU'LL BE CRUCIFIED.
THAT'S THE ONLY REASON YOU'RE TALKING TO ME
OKAY, BULL ASIDE. WE'RE NOT GOING TO PROSECUTE. BUT YOU'VE GOT A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT BUSINESS.
LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT MONEY.
"THEY CALL THIS A DEMOCRACY BUT IT'S NOT. IT'S A PLUTOCRACY. MONEY RULES
"MONEY IS ALL THERE IS. MONEY IS YOUR CAR AND YOUR HOUSE AND YOUR CLOTHES. IT'S YOU AND ME
ALL IS ONE
"IT'S THOSE DISKS YOU STOLE AND THE INFORMATION ON THEM"
WE THINK YOU UNDERSTAND THIS AT LEAST ON SOME PRIMITIVE LEVEL.
WE MIGHT BE WILLING TO LET YOU USE THESE DISKS TO BUY YOUR WAY INTO SOME REAL MONEY
TDK
DISKETTES
12

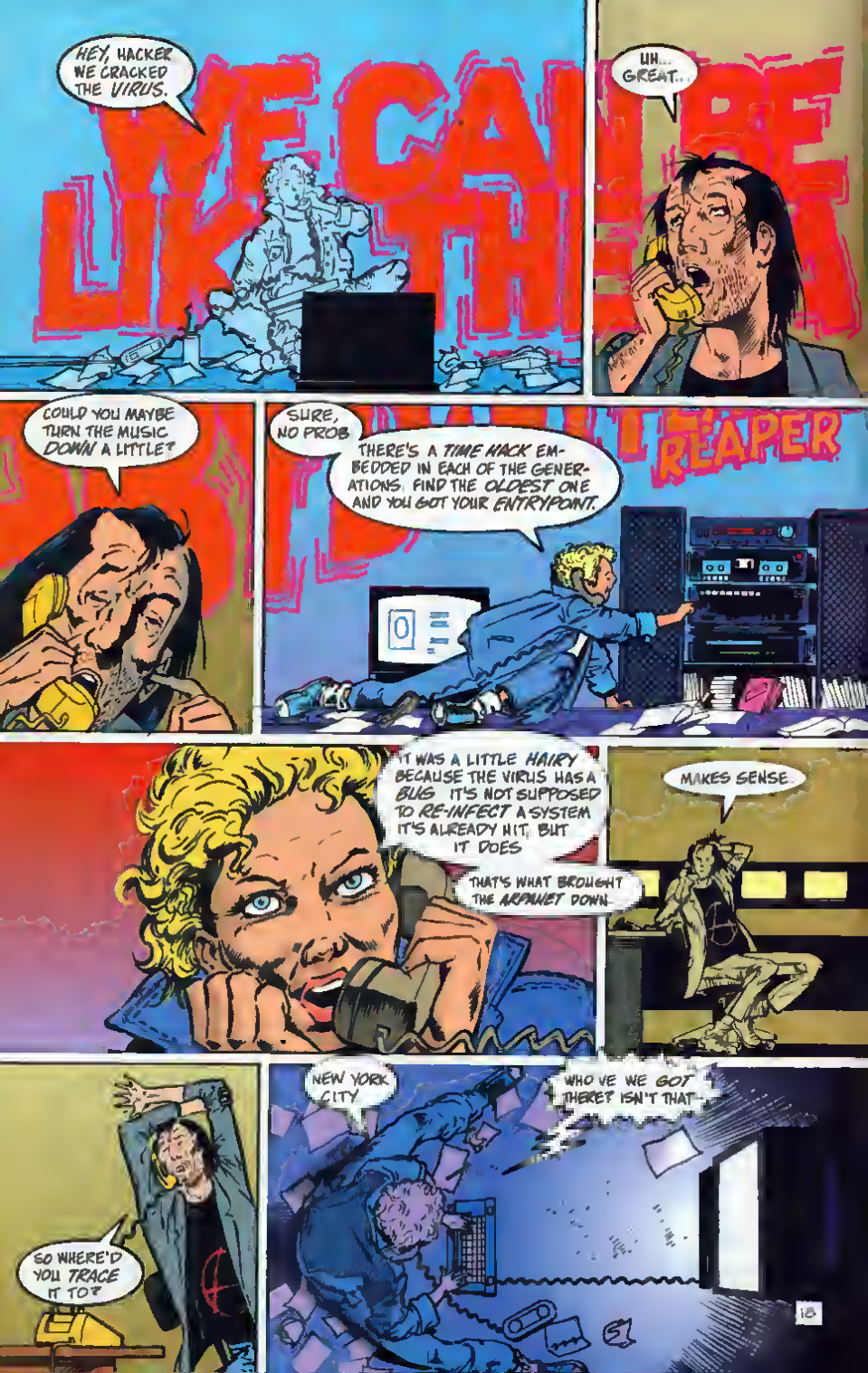
LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT. YOU CAUGHT ME STEALING, SO YOU OFFER ME A PROMOTION?
YOU'RE DANGEROUS IF WE OWN YOU WE DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT YOU.
NOT FOR SALE
WELL, IT'S OUT OF MY HANDS, THEN, ISN'T IT?
PACK YOUR THINGS AND BE OUT OF HERE IN HALF AN HOUR.
OH, AND MARSHALL?
I'M SURE I DON'T HAVE TO POINT OUT THAT YOU'LL NEVER WORK IN THIS BUSINESS AGAIN
YOU TOO?
EXIT
I'LL TRUST IN THE LORD. HE'LL FIND ME WORK.
IF YOU SEE HIM, TELL HIM I'M LOOKING, TOO
YOU'LL HAVE TO TELL HIM THAT YOURSELF.
AJAX


Which was as close as he ever got to trying to convert me
Just as well He knew I was a LOST CAUSE
TOTAL
WHATSAMATTA, BIG GUY? DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING YOU LIKED?
TELEPHONE
PHONE
THIS ISN'T JU
EGO GAMES.
COULD START
WORLD WAR
I'M ON IT RIGHT NOW BUT YOU OWE ME
PHONE
14

IT'S MARSHALL. HOPE I DIDN'T WAKE YOU UP.
NO. I WAS UP JUST. GETTING READY FOR WORK.
WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?
SUTCLIFFE IF YOU DON'T GET HIM OFF THE PENTAGON THING IT COULD BE BIG TROUBLE
IF I DO THIS, IT'S GOING TO COST ME
IT COULD COST MORE IF YOU DON'T
TELEPHONE
FINE.
TAXI
DC CAB
15

HI. I'M BACK. DID EVERYBODY MISS ME?
... TRAVIS' DECISION. YOU WANT THE TRUTH, I'M A LITTLE SICK OF HIS DECISIONS.
SO LONG, SUTCLIFFE. DON'T FORGET TO WRITE.
LAUGH IT UP, MARSHALL. WE'RE NOT THROUGH WITH YOU!
EVER CONSIDER A CAREER IN DIPLOMACY?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO THANK ME. I HATE IT WHEN YOU GUSH.
NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME I'VE GOT WORK TO DO.

c
TAP
cu
TAP
cur
TAP
curs
TAP
THAT'S IT? HELL, I COULD HAVE DONE THAT.
BUT YOU DIDN'T. THAT'S WHY I GET THE BIG BUCKS
SARGE! MY SCREEN'S MOVING AGAIN!
MINE, TOO
YOU'RE GOOD BUT YOU'RE STILL A JERK.
MR. MARSHALL? PHONE CALL.
IT SOUNDS LIKE...SOME KID?
17


HEY, HACKER WE CRACKED THE VIRUS.
UH... GREAT...
COULD YOU MAYBE TURN THE MUSIC DOWN A LITTLE?
SURE, NO PROB
THERE'S A TIME HACK EMBEDDED IN EACH OF THE GENERATIONS. FIND THE OLDEST ONE AND YOU GOT YOUR ENTRYPOINT.
REAPER
IT WAS A LITTLE HAIRY BECAUSE THE VIRUS HAS A BUG. IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO RE-INFECT A SYSTEM IT'S ALREADY HIT, BUT IT DOES
THAT'S WHAT BROUGHT THE ARPANET DOWN.
MAKES SENSE.
SO WHERE'D YOU TRACE IT TO?
NEW YORK CITY
WHO'VE WE GOT THERE? ISN'T THAT--
18

wsxslsn ttyl1 November 10 05:11 :23
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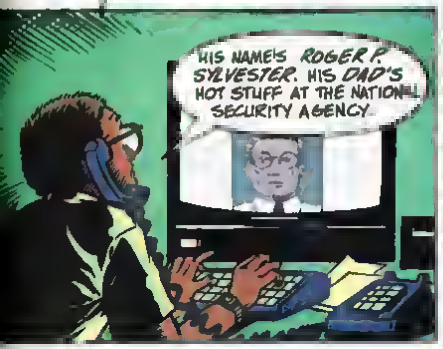
digitronix



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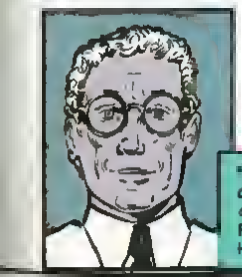
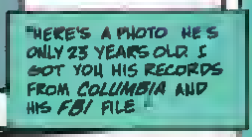




digitronix

OKAY. KEEP IN TOUCH.
THE NET'S BACK UP!
THANK GOD.
MR. STEEL?
JUST A REMINDER, SIR. YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE AT THE... ER... EXERCISE TEN MINUTES AGO.
CHRIST. THE WAR GAMES. I CAN'T POSSIBLY...
GENERAL EILING IS EXPECTING YOU, SIR. HE'S RATHER INSISTENT.
EVERYTHING'S UNDER CONTROL HERE. DON'T FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE TO HANG AROUND.
YOU'RE SURE?
POSITIVE.
OKAY. DAWSON'S HERE IF YOU NEED ANYTHING.
FINE.
SO... IT'S JUST FIXING ITSELF?
MORE OR LESS.
20

START

GET SYS DATE

DATE B.T. TODAY ?

Y

N

LOCATE FILE

MORE FILES ?

N

Y

VIRUS ?

N

Y

ALREADY DONE ?

Y

N

"IT MAKES THE VIRUS REWRITE ITSELF"

REPLACE VIRAL CODE W/ THIS PROG

INCR COUNTER

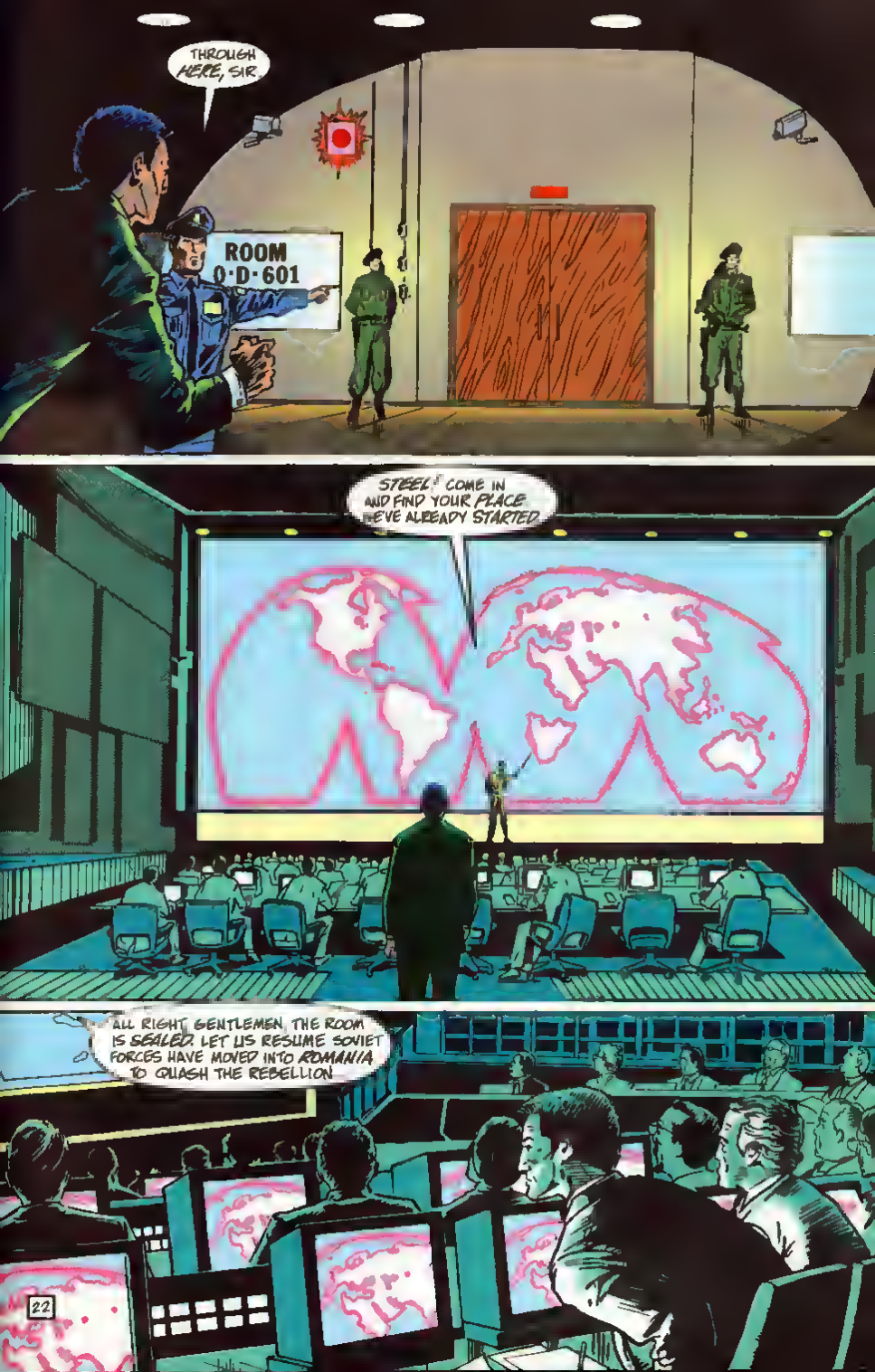
CTR LT 2 ?

N

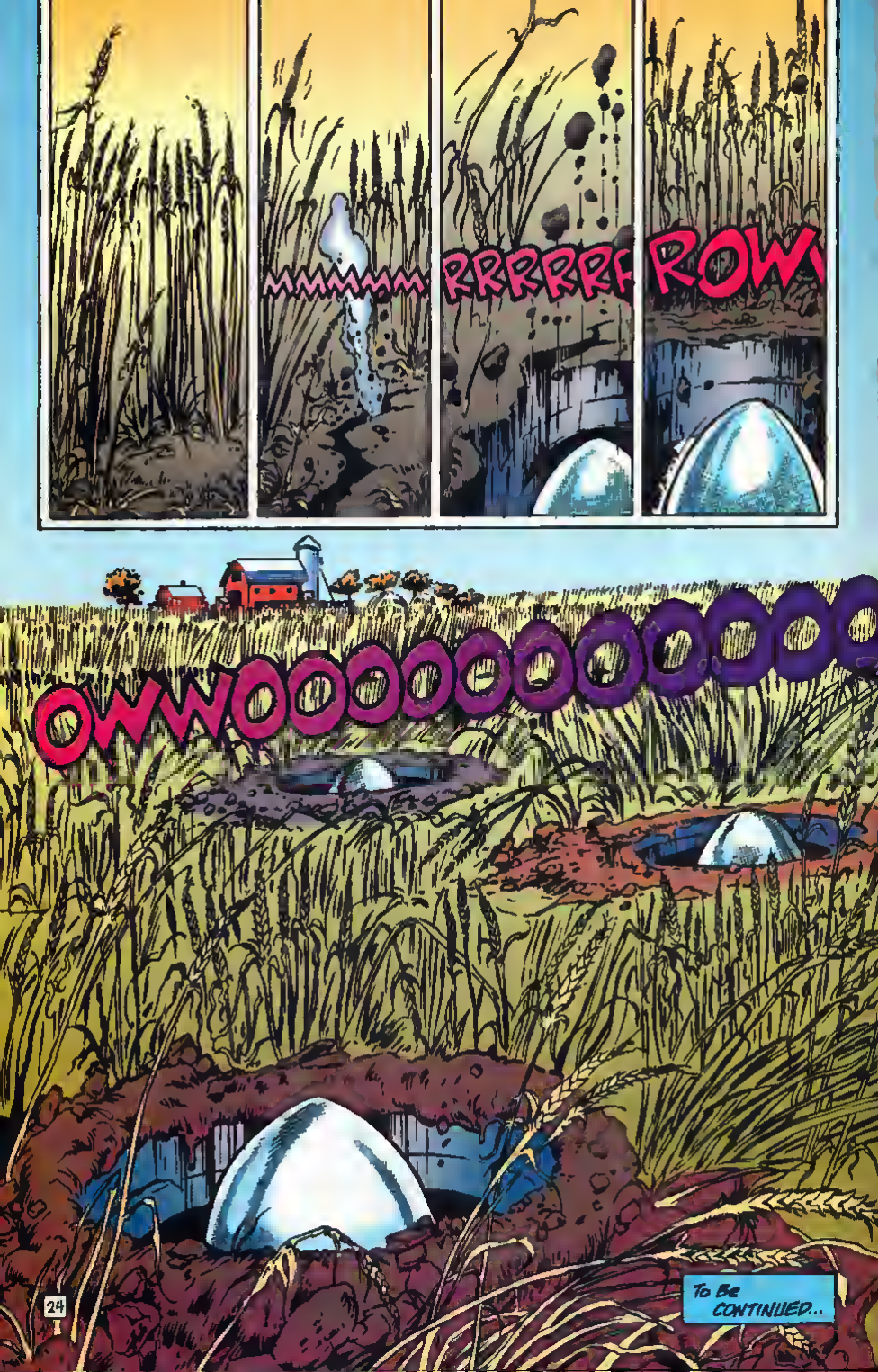
Y

DELETE SELF

END


THROUGH HERE, SIR.
ROOM O·D·601
STEEL! COME IN AND FIND YOUR PLACE WE'VE ALREADY STARTED
ALL RIGHT, GENTLEMEN. THE ROOM IS SEALED. LET US RESUME. SOVIET FORCES HAVE MOVED INTO ROMANIA TO QUASH THE REBELLION

NO RESPONSE
WHAT ABOUT VOYCE COMMUNICATION?
I'M TRYING NOW, SIR. IT SAYS ALL CIRCUITS ARE BUSY.
HOW DID THIS HAPPEN!?
YOU FOUND A SECURITY LEAK. WE PLUGGED IT
YOU SHUT THE BARN DOOR AFTER THE WOLVES WERE INSIDE
IF I CAN'T GET THAT ANTIVIRUS INTO CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN
...THEN GOD HELP US ALL


MMMMMM
RRRRRR
ROW
OWWOOOOOOOOOOOO
To Be CONTINUED...

usr/hacker/mail

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Next month we should have some letters in response to the previews of HACKER FILES #1 that we're about to send out; maybe we'll even have some letters from on-line correspondents in the meantime I'm up here on my own, trying to anticipate what you might want to hear about.

While pondering that question, it struck me that sooner or later the word "cyberpunk" is bound to come up in connection with THE HACKER FILES. So let's just preempt the whole controversy and talk about it right now, whet do you say?

HACKERS, CRACKERS, AND CYBERPUNKS

The earliest use of the term "cyberpunk" that I've ever heard was as the title of a story by the SF writer Bruce Bethke. It came out in *Amazing*, 1983, and apparently made enough of an impression on editor Gardner Dozois that he stored it away in his subconscious. He pulled it out again for an article in *The Washington Post* at the end of 1984. This is the point where the term entered common usage, and Gardner was using it then to describe a certain group of SF writers, including (but not limited to): Bruce Sterling, William Gibson, myself, Pat Cadigan, and Greg Bear. We were supposedly "purveyors of bizarre, hard-edged, high-tech stuff." Later critics would add Rudy Rucker and John Shirley as obvious fellow members of this alleged group.

By the summer of 1986 cyberpunk was all the rage within the small fishpond of science fiction. Michael Swanwick, himself a very talented writer, published an essay called "A User's Guide to the Postmoderns" in *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine* which attempted to place many of the prominent young writers in the field into one of two groups: the "cyberpunks" or the "humanists." The humanists supposedly consisted of writers like John Kessel, Kim Stanley Robinson, Pat Murphy, James Patrick Kelly, Leigh Kennedy, etc.

In December of the same year, Arbor House published *Mirrorshades*, the "definitive" cyberpunk anthology, edited by Bruce Sterling (currently in print from Ace Books). The authors included all the above-mentioned suspects as well as Tom Maddox, Marc Laidlaw, Jim "Humanist" Kelly, and Paul Di Filippo. Many of the stories were atypical of the movement, as Bruce tried to make the term cyberpunk as flexible and all-encompassing as possible. It was, after all, his movement—he edited the book and he published the official fanzine, *Cheap Truth*.

In the months that followed, younger writers like Walter Jon Williams became converts. Computer game companies and comics publishers jumped on the bandwagon. Some of the previous generation of writers, like Greg Benford, denounced the movement as all flash and no substance; others like Norman Spinrad welcomed it wholeheartedly. Love it or hate it, it seemed everybody had some opinion about it.

I was always at least a little uneasy with the whole thing. I was delighted with the publicity, and happy to be thought a hot young writer. I lived in the same town and went to writers workshops and hung out with Bruce Sterling, and I wrote for *Cheap Truth*. On the other hand, I thought there were a lot of other things to write about then technology.

What had started out as a sort of literary movement—Bruce and I used to spend a lot of time on the phone or hanging at conventions with Gibson and Rucker and Shirley, arguing literary politics, swapping ideas—soon took on a life of its own. Apparently contemporary culture needed a word for this force that was starting to happen inside it. There was a new generation that had grown up with video games and no longer saw computers as threatening. There were 12- and 13-year-old kids who'd gotten their first copy of Gibson's *Neuromancer* about the same time they got their first Apple IIe. "Cyberpunk" came to mean anything that was part of this emerging culture. Instead of cyberpunk being a subgenre of SF, the culture itself was becoming science-fictional.

• • • • •

At the heart of this emerging culture is the hacker, a kid with a computer, a modem, and enough cunning to outfox any work-for-hire programmers in suits. The character entered the popular imagination through a deservedly popular book by Steven Levy, *Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution*. Certain key concepts filtered quickly into consensus reality. Hackers were okay, they never destroyed data. Crackers were the bad guys, who might change your bank balance or put a virus into your computer at work. Most important, the general public began to realize something that cyberpunk had been saying all along. The gold standard is dead; we are all on the information standard now.

Everything is information. The money in your bank account is not dollar bills in a box somewhere, it's just digits in a computer memory. The photographs on the front page of your newspaper may have started out as prints on paper, but by the time the newspaper got them they were long strings of ones and zeros, and, most likely, they had been stretched, compressed, or edited so they would look better, or, more insidiously, more "real." The music on a compact disk is just information, and so is the sound of your voice as it's bounced off a communications satellite.

Once you realize how much of your world is information, you see how vulnerable it is to manipulation. We all find ourselves on the edge of that particular precipice from time to time (like when the computer goes down at the bank); the hacker *lives* on that edge.

Cyberpunk, the literary movement, was the first to celebrate living on that edge. Futurologist Alvin Toffler called the computer revolution the Third Wave (the agricultural revolution was the first and the industrial revolution the second). The early cyberpunk fiction advocated surfing on Toffler's wave, riding it for thrills, for profit, or just because it was there and it was not going to go away. Hackers were heroes of much of this fiction, and the hacker ethics—freedom of information, survival of the most efficient—were much in evidence.

These days everybody from Clifford Stoll (author of *Cuckoo's Egg*) to *The New York Times* uses "cyberpunk" to mean hacker—or, worse yet, cracker, there have been special cyberpunk issues of everything from the literary quarterly *The Mississippi Review* to *Keyboard Magazine*. The ultra-slick *Mondo 2000* (formerly *Reality Hackers*) is devoted to cyberpunk, hacking, and megavitamins.

The latest buzzword in cybercircles is virtual reality. As I write this, the current issue of *Scientific American* is devoted to "How to Work, Play and Thrive in Cyberspace." In London two weeks ago I saw a virtual reality video game where two players, for about five dollars apiece, could stalk and shoot at each other in cyberspace.

The concept is like headphones, only more so. You wear goggles that are actually miniaturized computer screens, giving you the illusion of

depth in a computer-generated landscape. You wear a glove fitted with sensors so that you can reach into and "handle" objects in this artificial world. The practical uses are supposed to be nearly limitless—fantastically accurate laser surgery, the ability for anyone to have the experience of travelling to inaccessible places, the ability to visualize and manipulate data in its newest form.

It's the cyberspace that Gibson described in *Neuromancer*, and it's happening now. The world is catching up to cyberpunk, becoming cyberpunk.

So, is THE HACKER FILES a cyberpunk comic?

I don't think so.

For all its wonderful potential, virtual reality is, right now, no more than a fantastically elaborate video game. In its early days, it was often called "artificial" reality, but the name was dropped because of the negative connotations.

For me it *is* very artificial. Don't get me wrong. I've been working with computers since 1976, and am the very proud owner of a Toshiba notebook-size laptop, which is the single greatest tool I have ever had available to me as a writer. I would not want to give up any of the technology I live with—CDs, VCRs, BBSs, etc., however, I can never forget that all of these things are simply objects. They are tools, means to an end. What I truly love is the music, or the movies, or the letters that the machines bring to me. They give me the most efficient delivery of those things I've ever had, but it is still the things they deliver that I love.

At its worst, cyberpunk is a religion of technology. It believes that technology can solve any problem, and that the solution to the problems that technology itself causes is, in turn, still more technology. This is the attitude that brought us SDI, a defense system so complicated that it cannot even be designed or built by mere human beings. It is the attitude that says we can build laser cannons to shoot pollutants out of the sky, that if we don't like the weather we'll build our own, that if the world becomes too polluted, hot, or radioactive, we can always go live in a nice artificial world where everything is geometrical and predictable.

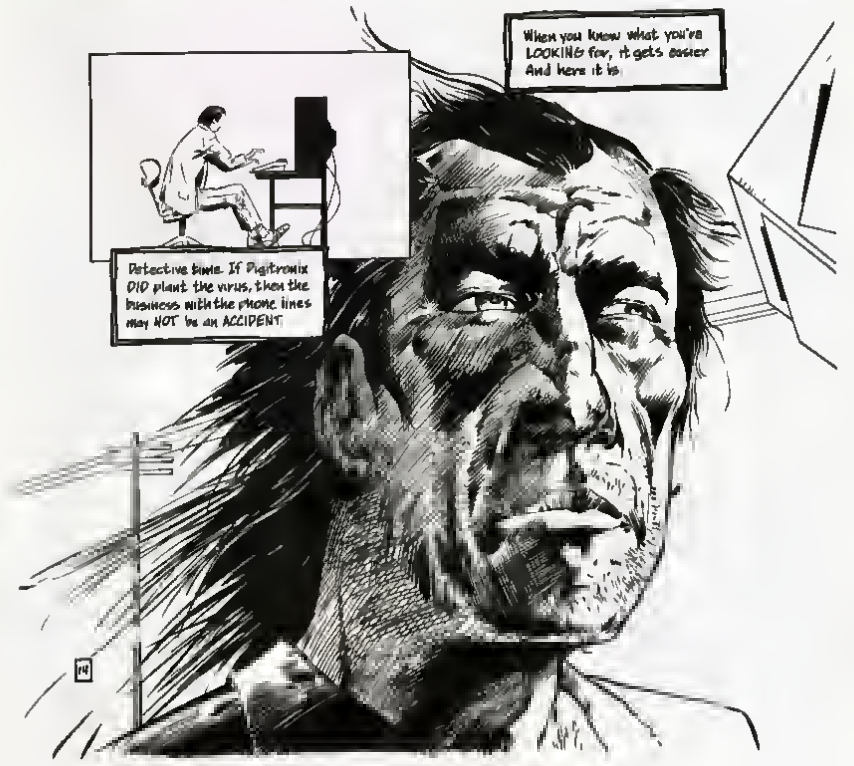
THE HACKER FILES is, first and foremost, about people. It's about the individual in the heart of the machine that is corporate America—that is corporate Earth. It says that information should be free, but so should human beings. It says money isn't everything and it says be nice to each other.

That's why it's drawn by hand, by Tom Sutton, with a pencil, on paper. Tom makes the individual characters in the story come to life, and those characters will always be more important than the mechanics around them. It's inked by hand and lettered by hand because that's what Marshall is all about—the ghost in the machine, the uncontrolled impulse, the meat-puppet that cannot be reduced to ones and zeros.

In future issues we'll be confronting this business of real versus digital, we'll be looking at big government and big money, and we'll be giving our own versions of late-breaking news stories, like Operation Sundevil's war on the hacker community. Once again, I encourage all of you to get involved. Write letters, get in touch with me via the computer bulletin boards (more information on exactly how to do that next issue) and me complaints and ideas and philosophical musings. And in just thirty days we have:

NEXT ISSUE: Marshall is off to Cheyenne Mountain to stop World War III; Master Blaster smells a rat, and Sarge Steel confronts the Nuclear Launch Menu.

—Lewis Shiner


When you know what you're LOOKING for, it gets easier. And here it is.
Detective time. If Digitronix DID plant the virus, then the business with the phone lines may NOT be an ACCIDENT.

inside DC

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The Answer Dude

Some years ago, Bob Rozakis (DC's Production Director and co-creator/author of 'MAZING MAN) became known as "*The Answer Man*" by writing a regular feature in DC's books that replied to queries from our readership. This week in *Inside DC*, I'll be doing the same thing, but since I can't steal Bob's time-honored alter ego's name, I'll give it a '90s twist and become. *THE ANSWER DUDE*. So prepare to become informed..

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The cancellation of SUICIDE SQUAD continues to be a frequent topic of discussion in letters to *Inside DC*, with Sir Jon Johnson of Portland, CT, M. Bonnie of Bedfordshire, England, and George Shato of Auburn, AL, leading the recent chorus of lamentations. M. and George take me to task for not informing *Inside DC*'s readers of SQUAD's low sales early enough for something to be done to reverse the book's sales trend. "If I had known that SUICIDE SQUAD was suffering from poor sales, I would have bought two or three copies every month," George asserts. "Now, however, it is too late." Normally I feel it's best to leave the passage of such information to the series' editor; editors will often make appeals to readers in the letters columns of troubled books. But if the editor doesn't mind, I'll let you know in this forum when a book needs an extra boost. This type of fan support helped save TV shows like *Cagney & Lacey* and *Designing Women* from cancellation, so who knows? It could work in comics, too.

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Aspiring comics writer Timothy E. Jones of Philadelphia, PA, asks, "Why not make a non-sequential and non-connected series where new writers and artists can do their own stories without any binding rules?" DC tried a similar project back in the early '80s called NEW TALENT SHOWCASE. Without any continuity, regular characters, or established creators to constantly attract readers, the book failed (but not before giving exposure to a variety of creators including Karl Kesel, Tom Mandrake, Kevin Dooley, Stephen DeStefano, and Mindy Newell). But on tap for a December release is SHOWCASE '93, a 48-page monthly superhero anthology title that spotlights underexposed DC heroes (**Blue Devil, The Shining Knight, Jade, and Obsidian**, for example, will appear in early issues), as well as providing solo shots for team characters like Cyborg and Geo-Force. SHOWCASE '93 will occasionally combine the talents of seasoned creators with new kids on the block. Before those proposals for SHOWCASE start rolling in, however, the series is already booked through most of '94—editor Neal Pozner is working far in advance, and this book looks exciting. While SHOWCASE '93 is temporarily a closed shop for new creators, if it does well, perhaps we'll consider a similar companion title.

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Duncan Davis of Nashville, TN, queries if there will be a RAGMAN continuation. Writer Elaine Lee, artist Gabriel Morrissette, and editor Bill Kaplan have already begun work on a new RAGMAN miniseries, details to come ..

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"Why has CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS, the cornerstone of today's DC, not yet been released as a trade paperback?" asks **Simon Waugh**, living down under in Melbourne, Australia. Many fans and retailers have asked that same question for the past few years, Simon, and you'll all be glad to hear that CRISIS will indeed become a TPB next year. It's definitely a book every DC fan should have on his/her shelf.

Simon also asks that the rest of the DC line follow the example of LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES writers Tom and Mary Bierbaum by adding a "Previously" or "Last Issue" box in each letters page to inform or remind readers of the previous installment's events. Not a bad idea. Fellow editors ..?

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Nelson Jimenez of Stamford, CT, wants to know why DC is engaging in "an apparent snub of George Reeves." Nelson feels we should honor Reeves, best known as the Man of Steel from the 1950's *Adventures of Superman* TV show, by a photo cover or a Superman Special based on the program. Actually, Nelson, the late Mr. Reeves has indeed been honored occasionally in DC text and historical pieces, as well as in 1985's 50 WHO MADE DC GREAT. And as you cite in your letter, we also produced a house ad to promote *Nickelodeon*'s nightly showings of *The Adventures of Superman*, which I'm sure all of you cable subscribers are watching. And as far as Mr. Reeves ever appearing on a cover, we're slowly learning never to say never!

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"Your DC COSMIC (trading) CARDS were great," offers **Michael Sargent of Brigham City, UT**. But Michael was dismayed over several "errors" in the set, particularly the absence of "Mature" labelled characters like Green Arrow and Swamp Thing, plus missing characters like **Batman, Robin**, and members of L.E.G.I.O.N. "Why?" he asks. First of all, Michael, let's draw a distinction between an "error" and an "omission." The Batman characters were left out of the Impel trading card set due to an exclusive agreement with Topps for a series of BATMAN cards, which should be available now. Swamp Thing was also missing from the card set for a similar licensing reason. And as with the current format of WHO'S WHO, space didn't allow the inclusion of every DC hero in the first series. Hopefully, if future series of trading cards are issued, some of the missing members of the DC Universe will appear.

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Michael R. Creegan of Staten Island, NY, asks, "How are creative teams chosen?" Usually the editor decides who will write and draw a comic book. The editor must take into consideration the scope, atmosphere, and direction of a series and then find an appropriate creative team. But sometimes, the creative team picks itself when a writer and artist team up and pitch a new series idea to an editor.

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Drew Taylor of El Dorado, AR, writes to ask for an unusual companion to WHO'S WHO: 8" tall cardboard figures, similar to paper dolls, of DC's heroes and villains. Hey, I wouldn't mind having some of those on my desk, but we have no such plans. Anyone else second the motion?

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I'm out of room, but not out of mail. We'll return to the mailbag in a future *Inside DC*.

See you next week.

—Michael Eury

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